

The manner in which they are made seems to betray either a deficiency of interest in the great subject, or a pusillanimous anxiety not to offend those readers who would think it too directly religious. It is sometimes adverted to as if rather from a compelling sense that if there is a future state, moral speculation must be defective, even to a degree of absurdity, without some allusions to it, than from feeling a profound delight in the contemplation. When the idea of another life is introduced to aggravate the force of moral principles, and the authority of conscience, it is done "so as to appear like a somewhat *reluctant* acknowledgment of the deficiency of inferior sanctions." The consideration comes and vanishes in transient light, after the writer has eloquently expatiated on every circumstance by which the present life can supply motives to goodness. In some instances, a watchful reader will also perceive what appears too much like care to divest the idea, when it *must* be introduced, of all direct references to that sacred Person who first completely opened the prospect of immortality, or to some of those other doctrines which he taught in immediate connexion with this great truth. There seems reason to suspect the writer of being pleased that, though it is indeed to the gospel alone that we owe the positive assurance of immortality, yet it was a subject so much in the conjectures and speculation of the heathen sages, that he may mention it without therefore so expressly recognising the gospel, as he must in the case of introducing some truth of which not only the evidence, but even the first explicit conception, was communicated by that dispensation.

Taking this defective kind of acknowledgment of a future state, together with that entire oblivion of the subject which prevails through an ample portion of elegant literature, I think there is no hazard in saying, that a reader who is satisfied without any other instructions, will learn almost every lesson sooner than the necessity of habitually living for eternity. Many of these writers seem to take as much care to guard against the inroad of ideas from that solemn quarter, as the inhabitants of Holland do against the irruption of the sea; and their writings do really form a kind of moral dyke against the invasion from the other world. They do not instruct a man to act, to enjoy, and to suffer, as a being that may by to-morrow have finally abandoned this